

Engaging, Exploring, Expressing *The case for Theatre in Education*



Early morning. A large yellow van pulls up outside a school. Three people get out and, following a brief conversation with the site manager, begin to unload.

The objects they carry through to the school hall include steel tubing, folded cloth, sheets of cardboard, weights, a roll of what appears to be linoleum, a flight case. They begin to assemble these pieces together.

About an hour later, a class of thirty children trickles in to the hall. They are talking to each other in lowered voices. There is the occasional giggle. They sit on PE benches facing the stage and stare at what the actors have made for them. It might be a castle, a Victorian library, a field hospital or a forest. It takes up half the hall.

As the children settle, an Actor Teacher steps forward. They fall silent. She greets them, pauses, takes in the children's faces and asks them a question about themselves. The TIE programme has started.

The case for Theatre in Education

What is described on the previous page happens between one to two hundred times a year, with children and young people in Birmingham and beyond. It is the bread-and-butter of Big Brum’s work as a Theatre in Education (TIE) company.

Big Brum use theatre and drama to work alongside young people to make meaning of their lives and the world around them. When we visit schools, we can see and feel that the work has an effect on the young people we work with, often powerfully so.

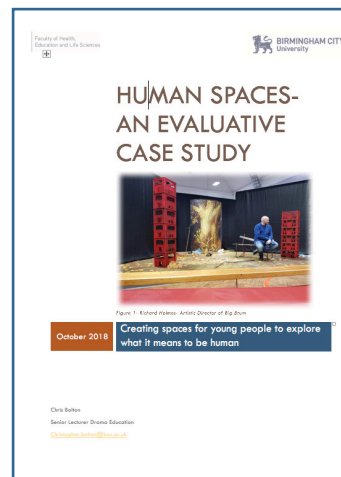
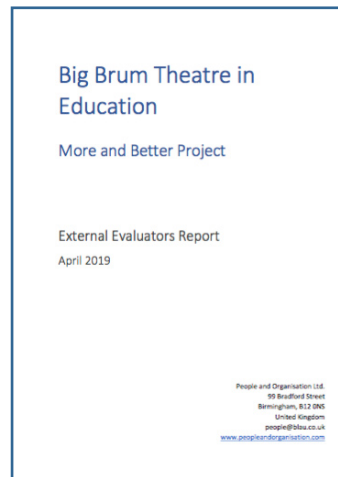
For the past three years, Big Brum has been working with children, teachers, school leaders, academics, professional evaluators and fellow-practitioners to better understand exactly what that impact is. This work has been supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation through their ‘More and Better’ Arts-based Learning fund.

This document sets out some of the main things that we have learned and where that knowledge has come from. We believe that what we have learned makes a powerful case for TIE in schools. The project findings relate to Big Brum’s distinctive approach to TIE, some principles of which are set out on page 16. However, we anticipate that they will also be useful to others engaged in Theatre and/or Drama in Education.

This document sits alongside other evidence from the same project, and especially:

- - **An External Evaluators Report** from People and Organisation, which takes an ‘outsider’s eye’ on Big Brum’s work;
- - **Human Spaces – An evaluative case study** by Chris Bolton, Birmingham City University, which analyses a single TIE session in an urban primary school to explain how Big Brum works;
- - **Film and multi-media resources**, created to accompany this document.

A list of other key documents relating to the project can be found on Page 12



This report has been written by Ben Ballin for Big Brum Theatre in Education.

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Theatre in Education: *The case in brief*

“There was one pupil, and you couldn’t shut her up! She loved speaking up, she loved it all. She’s usually all over the place, she’s all hands. She has English as an additional language, but these sorts of activities helped her out ... she is much more comfortable doing them.”

– Primary teacher (1)



“She was driven to speak, she has obviously lost her self-consciousness ... She wasn’t being judged on it. She was experiencing the freedom to speak about a subject.”

– Data interpretation panel (5)

Project evidence tells us about many young people responding like this girl, often in ways that their teachers have not seen before. It tells us that TIE enables such young people to:

- *Engage, explore and express;*
- *Be and feel included.*

It also tells us that TIE can help schools provide opportunities for young people to *really learn and really live.*

Engaging, exploring and expressing (see page 5)

Project evidence repeatedly tells us that TIE engages young people (like this girl) imaginatively, emotionally, intellectually, physically. This includes many young people who are otherwise disengaged or disaffected.

Almost all young people relate to the stories and engage with the concepts at their centre. Because the stories are about themselves and their world, they have a reason to explore the ideas and feelings involved and can never be ‘wrong’ in their responses.

TIE thus offers them a reason and the freedom to communicate and helps them elaborate the words and concepts with which to do so. The evidence shows that

this frequently boosts talk, writing and self-confidence. It also shows that the careful use of questioning and dialogue is crucial to this process.

Including (see page 8)

Project evidence repeatedly tells us that TIE is radically inclusive, in a way that cuts through established ideas about ‘ability’ (and ‘disability’) and has value for all learners.

Moreover, during the three years of the project, many hundreds of young people have had high quality theatre experiences who would not otherwise have had such opportunities.

Learning and living

(see page 9)

Project evidence shows that TIE has in many schools made a meaningful contribution to

the curriculum: especially to speaking, listening and writing, but also to the breadth and depth of understanding in other subjects. It has made a significant contribution to young people’s personal development: confidence, empathy, social skills and even personal maturation.

Evidence has frequently uncovered tensions between the priorities of TIE and the demands faced by teachers and schools. This raises questions and possibilities about how TIE practitioners can best collaborate with teachers and schools for the benefit of young people. The evidence also indicates the clearer benefits of sustained work with schools for securing and maximising such benefits.

The case for Theatre in Education



“Seeing Big Brum changed my life. Big Brum came to the school when I was 15 ... It was massive. It made me think, ‘I wouldn’t mind doing something like that.’ In some ways, I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing now without that segment of my personal history ... Seeing someone up on stage, with that Jack the Lad swagger, that confidence, that ownership, that empowerment ... it was a crystallising moment, the feeling of watching someone and thinking, feeling, ‘I could do that, these are people like me’”

– Secondary head of Drama (5)

“It’s hard for schools to slow down. Schools are driven by the need to produce data and outcomes. They can lose sight of the children. But those won’t be the things that children hold on to. You’ve got to be brave and step off and say, ‘this is the experience that my children need’ ... opportunities to make them caring, sensitive, understanding and compassionate. That’s why they need books and music. That’s why they need theatre”

– Primary head (5)

“Engaging to explore to express”

These words from a primary head sum up the impact of Big Brum’s TIE on her school (6). The following pages borrow her words as a framework. We have added the term **‘include’**, because a significant body of evidence has emerged on TIE’s contribution to inclusion. The words **‘learn and live’** help outline the impacts of TIE on teachers and schools.

Evidence

The main sources are summarised on page 11. Where appropriate, we indicate in the text where specific evidence comes from:

- (1) Teacher feedback
- (2) Pupil feedback
- (3) External Evaluation report
- (4) Human Spaces report
- (5) Data interpretation panel
- (6) Working/Advisory Group

The context – young people and schools

This is not an easy time for young people or those who work with them. Over 70% of Big Brum’s work takes place in areas of high socio-economic deprivation, where welfare and education cuts, growing levels of child poverty and housing precarity impact on young people and their families (4). This puts pressure on young people’s lives, and also on school budgets and resources, curriculum breadth, opportunities for cultural enrichment and – as many teachers have told us – time (1) (3) (5). Some of these pressures – often exacerbated by the demands on schools and academies to

meet restrictive performance measures – are outlined in the Human Spaces report (4) and the bibliography on page 12.

The project has therefore frequently raised questions about the purpose of Drama and the arts in such a context ... and indeed the purpose of education. How does a TIE company like Big Brum, asking ‘prickly’ questions about our lives and our world, best position itself? What can it offer? And how can it survive? While reports of the death of TIE have perhaps been exaggerated (Wooster, 2009), its position and survival are far from secure. We say more about this on page 10.

Engaging

"I liked that I was always at the edge of my seat wondering what will happen next"

– Secondary pupil, (2)

"I can see real teenagers doing that in real situations.

They carried their difficulties ... on their shoulders"

– Special School pupil (2)



"I think what's good about it is that it talks about real issues and issues that impact upon our children. It goes beyond our curriculum, and what we have to cover. We've got children who have come from other countries who have been abused and who have seen people being murdered ... racism has been an issue"

– Primary teacher (4)

Teachers use the word 'engage' over and again when describing TIE (1) (3) (4) (5). They repeatedly tell us that **TIE engages young people imaginatively, emotionally, intellectually, physically**. This includes many young people who are otherwise **disengaged or disaffected** (1) (3) (4) (5). The evidence indicates that almost all young people **relate to TIE's stories** and engage with the concepts at their centre. It suggests that this is because TIE invites them to bring their whole self to the story (3) (4) (5).

Engaging attention

The evidence repeatedly shows that young people of all ages are interested and attentive, showing a high level of engagement and participation during TIE programmes, and even more so during extended project work (1) (3) (5) (6). This includes many young people who are otherwise disengaged (see page 8). For example, a Primary teacher describes children's *"complete involvement and immersion"* and a head says, *"the work has this resonance. Just by the children engaging in Drama, you see the children focus, steel themselves and then engage. That's not something that they are always used to having to do."* An external observer: *"This one girl – her look, her demeanour, somehow she was able to be engaged so deeply, you could see it in her expression and her body language"* (5).

Emotional engagement

The evidence repeatedly highlights young people's emotional engagement (1) (3) (4) and indicates that in TIE this is integral to – rather than separate from – their cognitive learning (4) (5). The TIE programme resonates with and relates to them: *"they had invested in the narrative"* (5).

Developing empathy

Young people respond empathetically to TIE's resonant and relatable stories (3): *"they were able to empathise with the characters as the setting was in a home which everyone has and so could relate to"* (Secondary teacher). Following an extended project, such empathetic responses were readily transferred into other contexts (1) (3) (5).

Engaging with meaning

TIE helps make complex questions relatable to young people as they engage purposefully with apparent abstractions (5). Examples include their empathetic and thoughtful engagement with the legacy of WW1 or experiences of social exclusion (1) (2) (5). Through TIE, Year 6 children found personal resonances in Shakespeare texts (1) (5). A Primary head testifies, *"Big Brum engage children at a level which you wouldn't expect from a touring theatre company"* (5). An external observer comments, *"I was watching everyone in the room, forgetting about themselves and engaging with something meaningful"* (6). Evidence suggests that such engagement gets deeper as the TIE programme progresses (3) (4).

Exploring



“In awe of their ... immense talent for working with young people in order to explore complex and challenging situations”

– Heritage Education project manager (5)

“Big Brum don’t give you answers, they give you loads of questions”

– Secondary teacher (1)

“Everything that happens to children, happens at pace. Life is a treadmill, there isn’t a moment when they stop and reflect. So, you lose that ability to stop and reflect. In a TIE situation, it can be a lot more quiet, reflective, then open up to big dramatic moments. Then you get the questions that follow, once they have been stopped, slowed down. And children say, ‘that was quite special, that moment.’ They won’t necessarily have those experiences if you don’t give them those things”

– Primary head (5)

There is *“compelling evidence ... that pupils have gained **a greater felt understanding of themselves and the world** through their work with Big Brum”* (3). The evidence clearly shows that TIE provides a safe space where young people take time to ***access complex questions in ways that often exceed teachers’ expectations*** (1) (2) (4) (5) (6).

Investing in the story

Evidence shows that the ‘relatable’ stories in TIE engage with young people’s lives, giving them a reason to explore the concepts and feelings involved (3) (4) (5). As their personal responses to TIE can never be ‘wrong,’ *“there’s no fear of failure”* (Primary teacher) (3) (5). It shows how TIE invites young people to journey together, *“accessing learning in this ‘guilt-free’ environment”*, rather than simply receiving knowledge (4) (6). This *“safe environment for exploring difficult and deep issues”* (3) helps unlock meaningful dialogue and deeper learning (5): *“To be truly looking into the depth, as they were doing with the actors ..., they have to be invested in the narrative ... They have to care what*

was happening. They would not speak like that if they did not care” (1).

Dialogue and questioning

The careful use of dialogue and open questioning is crucial to the learning process. In TIE, this *“comes from where young people said things and then builds on that”* (5). *“Having them enact that out for us and then having R- speaking to you, really helps us to think about different parts”* (Special School teacher) (1). *“Because Big Brum combines performance with discursive work, that’s what makes them get these honest opinions”* (Secondary teacher) (5).

Deep learning

Because the concepts in TIE are about themselves and their world, young people engage with them. Evidence indicates that TIE often leads to deep learning: *“Looking at it, there’s a depth of delivery that may not come from other things children are exposed to”* (Primary head) (1) (3) (5). Evidence identifies higher order thinking such as: engaging with abstract concepts; the use of complex metaphors and symbolism (e.g. *“the bag is his identity”* – Year 9 pupil); making connections; prediction; problem-solving; metacognitive thinking; moral and philosophical reasoning; understanding different perspectives and - in a longer Primary project – independent, extended deep reflection (1) (3) (4) (5) (6).

Expressing

“I’d like the boys to tell the parents the whole story, because then the parents can understand ... we will never leave the kids to be like that again, never leave them ever alone”

– Special School pupil (2)



“The kids who rarely speak will do so with Drama, there’s not that fear of failure”

– Primary Drama teacher (5)

“It’s pretty special ... They’re really understanding what it’s all about. Without the Drama, you wouldn’t have got that. There’s a depth of feeling, of understanding, of emotion. The work is from Year 4 but I looked at it and asked myself, ‘are these Year 6?’”

– Primary head, analysing children’s written work (5)

TIE offers young people a reason and the freedom **to communicate for themselves**. It helps them to **precisely elaborate the words and concepts** to do so. The evidence shows that this **boosts talk and writing and the confidence to communicate**.

Communicating for yourself

The evidence shows that, because in TIE young people are engaged in exploring personally-relatable concepts safely with others, *“they are not just responding for an exam paper: the children have a reason to talk”* (c/f the ‘unstoppable talker’ on page 4) (1) (3) (4) (5) (6). During a TIE programme, young people often develop *“a sense of having complete intellectual control over their work”* (5). This can feed in to extended project work: *“Because they created the curriculum for themselves, they did it [written work] for themselves”* (Primary teacher) (1). The project records several instances where young people even undertook self-initiated writing, art work or research as a response to the TIE (1) (3) (5).

Expressing understanding

Young people use images, drama and especially language to articulate their ‘felt understanding’ in response to TIE (1) (2) (3) (5). They also make sophisticated use of words and images to explore the concepts involved: *“paradox, colliding ideas, the dark and difficult stuff. This work pushes understanding to a new level: it is about being exploratory writers who play with words and ideas. It works against the culture of ‘right answers’ but with the culture of critical thinking”* (Primary teacher) (5). Observers note the ‘economy and clarity’ of the language used by Actor Teachers and the precision of language used by young people, especially when describing their feelings: indicating heightened emotional literacy (5) (6).

Talkers and writers

TIE promotes confident spoken language: *“The way it gets set up, the children are ready, dressed to talk about it. When they come back to class, they have a lot to talk about”* (Primary head) (3) (5). There are numerous examples of TIE stimulating exceptional writing (1) (2) (3) (5), especially when this has been approached systematically by the school (1) (3) (5). Extended projects clearly show development in children’s speaking and writing, with a class in one Primary school meeting age-related expectations in writing, despite having previously fallen behind (1) (3). Vocabulary analysis shows that young people use richer, more considered and sophisticated language following TIE (e.g. modals, metaphors), especially in relation to feelings (1) (2) (3) (5).

Including



“For many of the Pupil Premium students ... this was their first experience of live theatre”

– BTEC Performing Arts teacher (1)

“Companies going into school is essentially important, it brings theatre to people who have been denied it”

– Applied Theatre lecturer (5)

“The EAL children, working in more than one language, knew what to do about sadness”

– Primary head (5)

“We are a Social Emotional and Mental Health Secondary School. Our students have a range of learning needs including autism, attention deficit disorder and emotional trauma. As a result, we have students who suffer from low self-esteem, attainment and attendance problems. The students really enjoyed the session. For most this was their first experience of Shakespeare being performed live”

– Special School teachers (1)

TIE is **radically inclusive**, providing time and space for young people’s learning in a way that cuts through established ideas about ‘ability’ (and ‘disability’) and has **value for all learners**. This builds young people’s **confidence and sense of agency**. Each year, through Big Brum coming into schools, many hundreds of young people **access high quality theatre** who would not otherwise do so.

Inclusion

With TIE, there is a high level of inclusive learning, engagement and participation by all young people (1) (3) (4) (5). This includes the following identifiable groups: usually disengaged, quiet or reticent young people (1) (3) (4) (5) ; ‘less able’ or under-achieving pupils (5); EAL pupils (like the girl on page 3); those with ADHD, ASD or learning difficulties (1) (3) (5); those with emotional trauma (1); those with physical or hearing disabilities (1) (2) (3) (5) (6); ‘difficult’ or ‘challenging’ young people and those with behavioural issues (1) (3) (5). The structure of TIE, especially the time and space allocated to young people’s ideas, are significant contributory factors (1) (3) (4) (5).

Confidence and agency

Evidence repeatedly shows that young people’s personal and social confidence increases through TIE (1) (3) (5). They gain confidence as emotionally literate communicators (1) (5): *“It was very noticeable that children ... put their points forward with certainty, forcefulness and sometimes even anger”* (External evaluator) (3). During Primary and Secondary projects there was evidence of benefits for greater self-confidence, self-esteem and autonomy (e.g. developing self-initiated writing) (1) (2) (3) (5). In one Primary school, which uses Drama systematically, children showed greater maturity and resilience (1) (5).

TIE provides an ‘agentic space’ where all young people’s contributions are valued (1) (4) (5) (6). *“The involvement of student participation was really valuable for inclusion”* (Secondary teacher) (1).

Access to theatre

TIE provides the first or only experience of high quality theatre for hundreds of young people. This is the reality in numerous Primary, Secondary and Special schools, even when pupils study Drama (1) (2) (3) (5): *“most of our students have never seen a live performance”* (Secondary Head of Performing Arts) (1). It helps address social exclusion by bringing *“theatre to people who have been denied it”* (Applied Theatre lecturer) (1) (3) (5).

Learning and living

“There is something transformatory about the Drama experience”

– Lead practitioner for Speaking & Listening, Secondary MAT (6)

“How hard is it to look at the children, not the data?”

– Applied Theatre lecturer (5)

“Once they had developed a sense of empathy, they could write”

– Primary teacher (1)



“With Drama, learning becomes 3D. It involves self, body, mind, feelings ... everything. Children have more choices and have a voice. It supercharges learning and it becomes something else”

– Primary head (6)

Towards a living curriculum

“The girl speaking out and loving it. That’s core. It leads to writing but it can transfer to other areas”¹

– Data Interpretation Panel (5)

Curriculum

The evidence shows that TIE can make a ***meaningful contribution to the formal curriculum and beyond***: especially to speaking, listening and writing, but also to the ***breadth and depth of young people’s understanding in other subjects***. It makes a significant contribution to young people’s ***personal development***: their confidence, empathy and social skills.²

Project schools told us they had built on TIE effectively in the following curriculum areas

(1) (2) (3) (5):

English: e.g. writing, reading (including inference), speaking & listening, vocabulary, story, poetry, letter-writing, biography, script-writing

Drama: e.g. for BTEC Applied Theatre modules, live theatre reviews, non-naturalistic forms

History: e.g. as part of site-specific heritage programmes, Black History Month, The Victorian, The First World War

PSHE: including emotional literacy and wellbeing

Cross-curricular: confidence; problem-solving, analysis and other thinking skills; self-directed learning; Rights Respecting Schools; British values

Art: e.g. portraits and caricatures based on ‘Rumpelstiltskin’, graffiti art, theatre posters

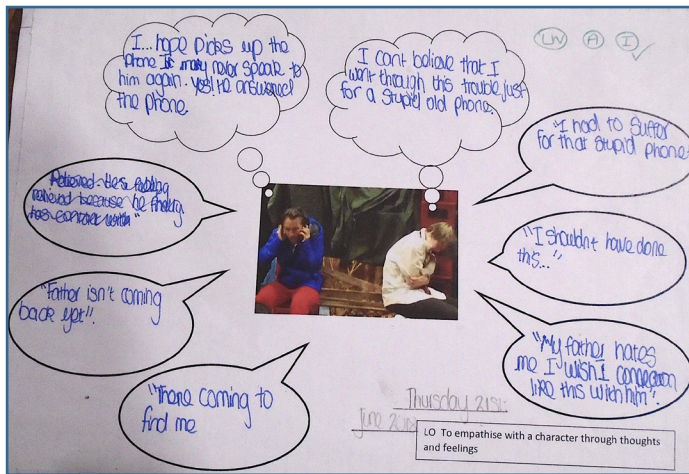
Design Technology: e.g. model homes and houses, ‘straw babies’, ‘a wall of hope’

Pedagogy

The outcomes set out in this report are not accidental. Teachers repeatedly commented on ***the quality of the artistic work***, but also on how this was complemented by ***dialogue, questioning and the creation of an enabling environment*** for young people’s ideas (1) (3) (4). This is analysed in some detail in the ‘Human Spaces’ report and has potential for the development of professional development programmes for teachers (3) (4) (5) (6).

¹ See page 3

² N.B. In two primary schools, where Big Brum carried out successful extended work on language development, it was invited back to work on personal and emotional development. To put this another way, language opened the door to the work, but it was personal and emotional development that ‘kept us in the room’ (1) (3) (5) (6).



"It's about going on a journey yourself, and bringing the children with you" – Primary teacher (5)

"The challenge from here is to see how we can use the embedded learning" – Primary head (5)

"Big Brum is always making us rethink our approach to education" – External observer (6)

"Personally, I remembered why I was a teacher" – Secondary Drama teacher (1)

"In order for children to be emotionally literate, teachers need to be emotionally literate. Teachers need to feel it, before inviting children on the journey. It isn't easy. It depends on the team you are with. People don't want to be marked or ridiculed. How will they engage? That learning with the children is important" – Primary head (5)

Partnerships and professional development

There are **tensions between the priorities** of TIE and the demands faced by teachers and schools (1) (3) (4) (5). This raises **questions and possibilities** about how TIE practitioners can best collaborate with teachers and schools for the benefit of young people.

The evidence indicates that **the benefits of sustained work with schools are greater** and 'more assured' (3). More can happen when practitioners, teachers and young people travel together beyond the norms to create a multi-dimensional 'living curriculum.'

The evidence repeatedly indicates that **teachers' professional development** is crucial both to sustaining future partnerships, and to clearly maximising the benefits of TIE for young people (3) (4) (5) (6). *"The better the quality of teachers' support, preparation and follow-up, the greater the impact on the pupils"* – External Evaluation Report (3).

Building a future for TIE

(1) As a result of this project, schools and Big Brum can be confident about the powerful impacts of TIE on young people. The case is strong, despite the present challenging environment.

(2) To build a future for TIE, Big Brum will need to keep working with partners and allies to disseminate and publicise project findings and to influence key decision-makers.

(3) Moving forward, it is clear that it is collaboration, especially with teachers, which will be key to the next phase of TIE's development.

(4) In keeping with the spirit of TIE, any future CPD programme must:

- **engage** adults emotionally and intellectually with TIE stories, concepts and methodologies. [Primary teacher, extended project: *"This has been a really emotional journey, not only for the children but the adults as well. The work really does get to you"* (1)];
- **explore** possibilities and approaches imaginatively, creatively and through professional dialogue – where there are 'no right and wrong answers';
- **express** the value of any resulting work for the young people, teachers and schools involved.

Content could draw on one or more suggestions from the project, such as:

- deconstructing the TIE experience as learners (4);
- exploring what 'engagement' looks and feels like (4);
- co-creating embedded work before and after a TIE programme (3);
- developing observation ('reading a room') and the analysis of young people's responses, including for specific groups (3);
- articulating CPD outcomes as measurable competencies such as developing questioning skills and Socratic dialogue, providing young people with the time to develop their own ideas (5) (6).

Methodology

The project aimed to *gather data on the impact of Big Brum’s work on young people and schools so as to make the case for Theatre in Education in schools; to popularise those findings.*

The evidence

An external evaluation, by People and Organisation Ltd, was complemented by several strands of internal evaluation and specialist input. Data was analysed by Data Interpretation Panels, including teachers, arts/culture practitioners and members of the Company.

Data (Fig 1)

Most data was qualitative, drawing on a wide variety of sources including: TIE session observations; teacher interviews, questionnaires and focus groups; children’s focus groups and examples of writing and artwork; practitioner feedback and blogs; filmed project sessions and commissioned research/evaluation. This data was collected by external evaluators, academics, guest observers and Big Brum.

Data interpretation (Fig 2)

Extracted data was analysed by Data Interpretation Panels which each included teachers, arts/culture practitioners and members of the Company (thereby ensuring a range of perspectives). Panels used Project Evaluation Criteria to organise their analysis (Appendix 3). Their interpretations then fed into this document and the External Evaluation report. The overall process was overseen and quality assured by the Project Advisory and Working Groups, which also advised on how findings could best be communicated. The research project and PGCE/MTL evaluations commissioned through Birmingham City University underwent the university’s own monitoring, ethics and quality assurance processes.

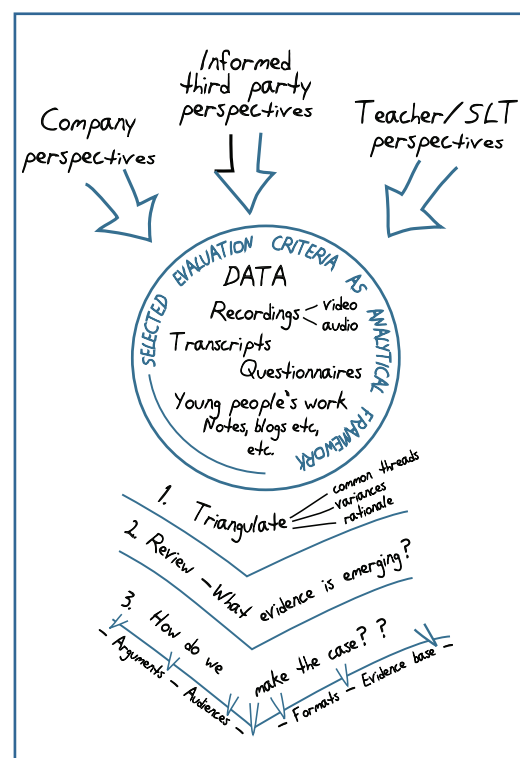
(Fig 1). The external evaluation team:

- watched 21 performances in 11 primary and 3 secondary schools for approximately 630 pupils
- conducted 18 interviews, plus two follow up interviews
- facilitated 8 workshop sessions plus two follow up workshops
- received 452 drawn or written responses to tasks from pupils
- received 5 responses to emailed end of term questionnaires
- attended 6 advisory group sessions

In addition, internal evaluation has drawn on:

- Feedback from over 100 schools, including questionnaires from teachers, PGCE and MTL students
- 5 third-party observations by British and international Drama and education specialists
- A small-scale research project conducted by Birmingham City University
- Reports and evaluation notes from four extended projects
- Teacher and practitioner interviews and blogs
- Programme reports from actor teachers
- Additional samples of children’s work
- Film evidence from two projects

(Fig 2, below): Diagrammatic representation of the process for data analysis. This was qualitative and interpretive, where each iteration of the ‘funnel’ distilled understandings and scrutinised them from multiple perspectives.



Supporting evidence – literature

Findings from this project confirm and build on evidence from a wide range of other sources about the impact of TIE, Drama and the arts on young people and schools.

Project documents

* - Available on request.

Act 2: Becoming Somebody Different - a response. Yeow Poon, People & Organisation, 2017.
<https://dramamtl.wordpress.com/2017/07/11/act-2-becoming-somebody-different-a-response-from-yeow-poon-people-and-organisation/>

External Evaluation Report – More and Better Project. People & Organisation, 2019.

Finding the centre, 2019. Multi-media materials at <https://prospero.digital> *

Engaging, exploring, expressing: the case for Theatre in Education. Film, 2019.

Fighting Talk. Dr Gill Brigg, 2019.
<https://dramamtl.wordpress.com/2019/07/30/fighting-talk-dr-gill-brigg/>

How does Theatre in Education (TIE) and Drama in Education (DIE) help children know more about themselves, and critically reflect on the world in which they live? Elaine Faull, University of Exeter, 2018. Part 1: <https://dramamtl.wordpress.com/2018/10/26/how-does-tie-help-children-know-more-about-themselves-and-critically-reflect-on-the-world-in-which-they-live/> Part 2: <https://dramamtl.wordpress.com/2018/10/26/reflections-on-drama-in-education-research-part-2/>

Human Spaces – An evaluative case study. Chris Bolton, Birmingham City University, 2018. (MTL student responses to case study:
<https://dramamtl.wordpress.com/2019/04/09/human-spaces-some-responses/>)

Masters in Teaching and Learning Evaluation. Chris Bolton, 2018. (Evaluates Big Brum contribution to course) *

PGCE Secondary Drama at Birmingham City University - Evaluation. Chris Bolton, 2018. (Evaluates Big Brum contribution to course) *

Reflection on Human Spaces

Conference. Paige Brookes & Heather Gooch, 2019.
<https://dramamtl.wordpress.com/2019/07/30/reflection-on-human-spaces-conference-paige-brookes-and-heather-gooch/>.

Big Brum and TIE

* - Available on request.

Big Brum case studies:

Abbeywood First School (2014);
Barefaced - Three Secondary Schools (2014);

Erdington Hall Primary (2013)
Golden Hillock School - Re-engaging disaffected learners (2013);

The Needs and Wants of Children & Young People with Physical Disabilities (2018, for PD net). *

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(2014).
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APPENDIX 1: Acknowledgment of people involved in the project

This broad emerging community of practitioners, educators and teachers has itself formed a contribution to the project's Aim (2) of purposeful network building.

The Company

Roseanna Baggott – Actor Teacher; Ben Ballin – Educationalist/project lead; Dan Brown – General Manager (Year 1); Matt Hinks – Education Partnerships; Richard Holmes – Artistic Director; Danny O'Grady – Actor Teacher (Year 1); Mathilde Petford – Digital Marketing Intern (Year 2); Jenny Smith – Acting Company Director (Year 1); Siobhan Twomey – Actor Teacher, Marketing and Administration Assistant; Judy Woodford – Administration and Finance

External Evaluation Team

Jutta Stahlhacke and Yeow Poon, People and Organisation; Iris Bertz, Iris Bertz Ltd; Rebecca Hemmings, Strawberry Words

Schools

Over 100 schools have contributed to the project. We would especially like to thank the following: Ark Tindal Primary Academy, Benson Primary, Colmore Junior, Colton Hills School, Erdington Hall Primary Academy, Fairway Primary Academy, Four Dwellings Academy, George Dixon Academy, Hillstone Primary, Hodge Hill College, Kingsthorpe Primary, Lancasterian Special School, Lindsworth Special School, Ninestiles MAT, Oaks Primary, Pedmore Primary, Pegasus Primary Academy, Perryfields High School, Plantsbrook School, Queensbridge School, St Edmunds RC High School, Stockland Green School, Treloars College, RSA Academy, Tudor Grange Academy, Victoria Special School, Waseley Hills High School. Thanks also to the teachers on the Drama MTL with Big Brum and Birmingham City University

Tours: additional cast and crew

Over The Top – Autumn 2016

Writer: Chris Cooper. Actor: Conor Nolan. Sound: Jack and Paul Baggott

The Ties That Bind – Summer/Autumn 2017

Rumpelstiltskin – The Straw Baby – Spring/Summer/Autumn 2017

Writer: Sam Holley Horseman. Actors: Jon Morris, Isabelle Taylor. Design: Ceri Townsend. Set construction: Trevor Woodford

Macbeth – Spring 2017, Autumn 2017/Spring 2018

Director: Abigail Pickard Price. Actors: Victoria Agache, Jon Morris

Flee – Spring/Summer 2018

Writer: Suriya Aisha. Actor: Victoria Agache

Worlds Apart Together – Autumn 2018

Writer: Chris Cooper. Actors: David Jackson, Jaime Seal

Big Brum Management Committee

Bob Lee, Retired Head Teacher - Chair; Kitty Patmore, Director, Harwood Real Estate - Vice Chair; Adam Battey, Performing Arts Technician (to 2017); Daniel Brown, Development Manager, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; Mariyam Harunah, Solicitor for Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP; Geoff Heaps, Retired Schools Adviser (to 2017); Claire Marshall, Creative & Partnerships Director, mac Birmingham (to 2017); Helen Myers, Teacher; Joise White-Tulloch, Student; Dr Jane Woddis, Cultural Policy Researcher (to 2017, former Chair)

Multi Media Resources

Creative team: Ben Ballin, Richard Holmes, Siobhan Twomey. Film: John Bradburn. Prospero digital platform: C&T

Human spaces research project, Drama MTL evaluation, PGCE evaluation

Chris Bolton, Birmingham City University

Project Advisory Group

Roseanna Baggott, Ben Ballin, Iris Bertz, Chris Bolton, Emma Bramley, Andrew Breakwell, Dr Gill Brigg, Chris Cooper, Rob Elkington, Jason Franklin, Juliet Fry, Anthony Haddon, Rebecca Hemmings, Matt Hinks, Sam Holley-Horseman, Richard Holmes, Malcolm Jennings, Helen Myers, Deborah Pakkar-Hull, Yeow Poon, Richard Simcox, Jenny Smith (Year 1), Jutta Stahlhacke, Matt Wardle, Dr Jane Woddis. Judy Woodford

Data interpretation Groups

Pilot 1: Matt Hinks and Richard Holmes, Big Brum; Dr Nicola Gauld, First World War Engagement Centre, University of Birmingham, Hugh Blackwood, Four Dwellings Academy

Pilot 2: Matt Hinks and Richard Holmes, Big Brum; Richard Simcox, Erdington Hall Primary Academy; Bobby Colvill, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Pilot 3: Matt Hinks, Big Brum; Andrew Breakwell, theatre director; Bob Lee, former Head, Pegasus Primary Academy

Benson projects: Matt Hinks, Big Brum; Bridget Dennis and Adrian Newell, Benson Primary; Sarah Mills, drama education practitioner.

External Evaluation – Primary: Jutta Stahlhacke, People and Organisation; Matt Hinks, Big Brum; Sue Penhallow, Former Assistant Head, Fairway Primary Academy; Malcolm Jennings, The Playhouse

External Evaluation – Secondary: Jutta Stahlhacke, People and Organisation; Richard Holmes, Big Brum; Hugh Blackwood, Four Dwellings Academy; Anthony Haddon, theatre director

PD net case study: Dr Gill Brigg and Michèle Taylor.

Working Groups

Schools senior leaders working group: Bridget Dennis, Head, Benson Primary (Chair); Elaine Faull, PhD researcher and former Head; Bob Lee, former Head, Pegasus Primary Academy; Ed Lee, Oracy/Drama lead practitioner, RSA Academy; Richard Simcox, Head, Erdington Hall Primary Academy; Karen Teasdale, Head of Drama, Waseley Hills School

Teachers working group: Hugh Blackwood, Head Of Drama, Four Dwellings Academy; Chris Bolton, Birmingham City University; Sue Penhallow, Former Assistant Head, Fairway Primary Academy

Practitioners working group: Andrew Breakwell (chair); Marcus Belben, People's Heritage Co-operative; Emma Bramley, North West Drama; Bobby Colvill, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire; Jacqueline Green, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; Malcolm Jennings, The Playhouse; Deborah Pakkar-Hull, Blah Blah Blah; Nikki Thorpe, People's Heritage Co-operative; Matt Wardle, North West Drama

APPENDIX 2: Project aims

Headline aims

- To gather data on the impact of Big Brum's work on young people and schools so as to make the case for Theatre in Education in schools.
- To popularise those findings.

AIM 1. To gather and analyse evidence about the efficacy of our work.

- To create a robust methodology for collecting that evidence, that allows it to be held up to scrutiny.
- To use internal and external evaluations, observation, feedback, research and events to analyse the impact of our work on schools, teachers and young people.
- To systematically experiment with and evaluate different models of how we can engage more effectively with the schools 'market', without losing sight of what is essential about our work.

AIM 2. To build and strengthen strategic partnerships and alliances, and raise the profile of Big Brum.

Objectives:

- To engage in meaningful dialogue with a wide spectrum of people in the arts and education communities: teachers especially, young people, researchers, academics, policy makers, practitioners.
- Network-building with others in the arts and education sectors, and their supporters, so that we can better support each other and stand together in the common struggle for survival with integrity.

AIM 3. To learn from the evidence we have collected and systematically reflect on what it is telling us about our theory, strategy and practice at all levels.

Objectives:

- As a Company, to systematically reflect together at a strategic level about how we proceed during and after this project. This has implications at a wide variety of levels that touch on every aspect of our work: artistically, educationally, organisationally; activities from marketing to policy to practice; from what publicity looks like to the way we create our programmes.
- To learn from and systematically apply these reflections to our practice and processes, including an ongoing and rigorous evaluation of what is proving most helpful to us from that learning.

Aim 4. To provide and disseminate evidence that makes the case for TIE in schools

Objectives:

- To make the case for TIE in a changing educational landscape
- To use evidence to effectively communicate the case for TIE to schools, funders, supporters, policymakers and the wider arts and education community.
- To profile our work to a variety of audiences through highly-engaging methods such as innovative use of media.

AIM 5. Present the artistic programme over the project period

The programmes being evaluated:

- Macbeth, Spring 2017
- Rumpelstiltskin, Spring/Summer 2017
- Macbeth and Flee, Autumn 2017 – Spring 2018
- Worlds Apart Together - Autumn 2018

The project also drew on evidence from 'Over The Top,' Autumn 2016, extended projects with the Ninestiles Primary Schools and Benson Community School, and work with PGCE and MTL students at Birmingham City University.

Over this period, Big Brum planned to:

- Engage a significant number of young people in schools.
- Consolidate relationships with schools and institutions that regularly work with Big Brum, and develop good working relationships with a significant number of new schools.
- Begin to develop relationships in these schools/institutions beyond the Drama department [e.g. with senior managers, History teachers] and evaluate the tactical success of this.

APPENDIX 3: Evaluation criteria

These criteria, agreed with the Company and supported by the Advisory Group, formed the main framework for data analysis. The criteria helped address the overall project aims:

- To gather data on the impact of Big Brum's work on young people and schools so as to make the case for Theatre in Education in schools.
- To popularise those findings.

Pupil impacts

Big Brum's success criteria stated that its work would be a success if ...

- Young people have been given a space to explore what it means to be human;
- Young people have gained a greater felt understanding of oneself and the world.

Criterion 1. To what extent have young people gained a greater felt understanding of themselves and the world through their work with Big Brum?

Subsidiary criteria: Pupil impacts

- C1.i How has this work enhanced young people's personal, social and emotional development?
- C1.ii How has this work helped young people think through complex issues (use higher order thinking skills)?
- C1.iii How have young people used language, images and drama to articulate that cognitive and emotional understanding?

School impacts

Big Brum's success criteria stated that work would be a success if ...

- The work meets the learning needs of young people and curriculum
- Associated teacher resources are relevant and useful
- [There is] a positive response from young people

Criterion 2. To what extent has this work met the learning needs of young people?

Subsidiary criteria: Learning needs

- C2.a. How have pupils responded to the work?
- C2.b. (As C1.i to C1.iii)
- C2.c. Are there particular pupils or groups of pupils for whom that impact has been especially marked/noticeable?

Criterion 3. To what extent has this work addressed the needs of the formal and 'hidden' curriculum in the schools?

Subsidiary criteria: Curriculum

- C3.a. What formal curriculum outcomes has it helped the schools address?
- C3.b. Has it had a measurable impact on pupil attainment, and if so in what ways?
- C3.c. In what ways have they been able to embed the work into their planning?
- C3.d. In what ways has it contributed to the schools' ethos and values?
- C3.e. In what ways has it contributed to how TIE and the arts are valued in the schools?
- C3.f. What obstacles have there been to meeting these needs?

Criterion 4. To what extent has this work supported teachers' professional development needs?

Subsidiary criteria: Professional development

- C4.a. How relevant and useful have support materials been? How have teachers used them?
- C4.b. What support have the teachers received from Big Brum staff and how have they been able to use it?
- C4.c. Has this personal and professional development been evaluated or accredited in any way? If so, how?
- C4.d. How have teachers responded to the work?

APPENDIX 4

“Art is a mode of knowing the world in which we live and the Company uses theatre and drama to work alongside young people to make meaning of their lives and the world around them”

– Artistic Policy, Big Brum

Big Brum’s nine principles of engagement with young audiences

- Small group work (working with up to 30 children/young people) to ensure a high ratio of actor teachers to young people, maximising participation and inclusion.
- Work delivered to our audiences 100% free to them at point of use. This is a very important factor in breaking down the normal socio-economic factors that prevent young people from accessing art.
- Discussions with all schools before we perform, to identify any special approaches that may be required.
- Bringing art into a space young people already inhabit. This is an important factor in breaking down a common barrier to arts engagement; transport to venues and the “alien” nature of many arts venues to young people.
- Trusting the child: Big Brum’s stated goal is to treat young people not as undeveloped adults but as human beings in their own rights, with their own experiences and understandings that go to the heart of what it is to be human.
- Safe space: the carefully facilitated drama sessions Big Brum uses create a safe space for young people, so young people are able to place themselves into our drama sessions and respond to a reality a safe distance from their own experience.
- No wrong answers: we are interested not in what is “correct”, but in what young people think and the processes by which they come to these conclusions.
- Effective questioning: we are renowned for our ability to utilise effective questioning with young people to open up imaginative responses.
- Working in the moment: we do not enter into a session with a particular goal in mind to discuss; we will work in the moment and respond to the enquiry of the young people themselves as they begin to process what they have seen and discuss this with our staff.

To download the Company’s Artistic Policy, visit: www.bigbrum.org.uk/howwework

Engaging, Exploring, Expressing - *The case for Theatre in Education*

can be accessed, along with supporting written and multimedia documentation, at

www.bigbrum.org.uk



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